Mrs. Beulah Allen Clarke.

Utica, N. Y.

A SERMON

OCCASIONED BY THE

DEATH OF MRS. BEULAH CLARKE,

WIFE OF WILLIAM CLARKE, ESQ. OF UTICA,

DELIVERED IN THE

BRICK CHURCH, CANANDAIGUA, N. Y.

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BY A. D. EDDY,

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God!!
ever-present
visible...

SERMON.

ECCLESIASTES VII. 2.

It is better to go to the house of mourning, than to go to the house of feasting.

THERE is no spot in creation, but the traces of divine providence are seen: no situation that will not give instruction to a serious mind, and lead a pious heart to God. The very scenery of nature associates the providences of heaven. In her mildest form, she leads us to that paradise which forever blooms in the beauty of spring; in her rougher features, she tells of the adversities of life, and the deeper sorrows of a coming retribution. In the breeze of summer, and in the harvests of the year, who does not hear the whispers of divine love, and mark the exuberance of divine favor? in the blighting tempest and the thunder, the voice of God's displeasure, and the stroke of his correction? In every falling leaf, you may see the index of the tomb: the deep chill of winter warns you of the cold night of the grave: the return of spring strengthens the hope of a future resurrection. The heavens declare the glory of God; the firmament showeth his handy work: day unto day uttereth speech; night unto night

showeth knowledge. There is no speech, nor language where their voice is not heard. Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world.

We are creatures of assimilation. Wherever we go, we soon conform to the scenes and society that surround us. And were it not for our continual poise, between the *world* and *God*, we should soon be changed into his blessed image as from glory to glory, or assume the frightful aspect of the ruined and the reprobate in despair. Banish us to the mountains, and we, erelong, become wild as the beasts that howl in their caverns. Blessed with the undisturbed retreat of peaceful and civilized life, a savage even becomes mild and peaceful. Let us climb for years amid the shrouds, and gaze upon the troubled sea, and we are unstable and boisterous as a stormy ocean. Seated continually by peaceful waters, and we breathe the calmness that sleeps on their unruffled bosom. Drink deep of the maddening revelry of a sinful world, and you approximate in feeling to the tenants of the pit; fix your eyes steadily and with interest on the moral excellence of Christ, and the glories of his kingdom, and you soon are changed into his image, and harmonize with the spirits of the upper world.

No one can remain unaffected by the scenes and society that surround him. Following the subtleties of error, he will lose sight of truth. Mingling with vice, its feverish pulse soon beats within him. Communing with Christ, he is assimilated to God.

As every province of nature and every providence of God affects us, it becomes us to examine well the stations that we occupy, the business we pursue, and the events which pass before us. Every circle of society and every passing scene leaves permanent traces on the soul, and adds to the formation of that character, which is durable as our existence. And to form a *character for heaven* is the great object for which we live.

God, by the very constitution of our nature, has determined the path of safety. Leaving the influence of all other society and of every other scene, let us consider the influence of the society of the dying and the scenes of death. *It is better to go to the house of mourning, than to go to the house of feasting.*

I. *We here learn the uncertainty of health and are reminded of its value.*

That which we have inherited and always possessed we forget how to appreciate. This is strikingly true in respect to that *health* which we have inherited, and which has been so long continued. And amid the thousand scenes that surround us, we seldom reflect, that it is the vigor of health alone, which clothes them with interest and value: that pleasure and profit and honor all die away as health departs from us.

Continued strength and vigor induce feelings of independence and often obliterate the remembrance of their Author; all sense of gratitude, and proper estimation of

their value. A presumptuous claim is created. What we have inherited from our infancy, and that which has always attended us, we call our own, and seldom imagine that without our pleasure it may be torn away in righteous judgment to our ingratitude and guilt.

Health, like every other blessing, is the gift of God, bestowed by his goodness and continued at his pleasure. The bed of *sickness* and of *death* tells you, from the youngest and the strongest, it may early and suddenly depart. No character or condition—no age or sex is exempted from the ravages of disease and death. Go to the chamber of *that youth*, who but yesterday was blooming in the strength and loveliness of health. The circles of gaiety were cheered by his smiles : his heart was alive to all that was happy, and his eye was brightened by the prospects of hope. Pleasures, honors, and riches lay in his path. He was treading on, with a light and a lovely step ; grasping all within his reach with an untiring hand. *To-day* a malady seizes upon him. The circles of gaiety have not a charm : music no more cheers his heart : luxury cannot delight his taste : the voice of the most tender friendship cannot dispel the sorrows of his sickness : all the bright array of pleasure, enlivened by the prospects of hope, cannot arrest the fear of death. Happiness and hope have both expired in the full realities of disappointment and disease. Look on that beating pulse—that feverish cheek—that wild and tearful eye—that throbbing heart—*that dying youth.* Think now of *health*—that *yours*

may soon give place to disease. Learn hence to estimate its value in the vigor of your life.

Behold *that mother*, once clothed with the smiles of friendship; her eye beamed with intelligence, her heart was filled with tenderness and love; spreading consolation and brightening with hope; all around her was domestic happiness. Now a disordered fancy is created. That eye once so intelligent and mild is wild and frightful—her countenance haggard—her heart deserted of kindness—reason has departed. Go to her weeping family—behold a father's blasted hopes!—children worse than motherless. Go to her cell of solitude—see the ravings of a disordered mind—her blasted hopes,—even the hope of heaven lost in derangement—hear her piercing shrieks—the clanking of her chains that bind her in the dungeon of a maniac!!

Think now of that *reason* which *health* preserves to you. Learn to employ that health and reason in seeking God and heaven, lest *health*, at last, be found only the power to sin more bold, and to reap a fuller harvest of wo; *reason* elevated and enlightened, nought but a dread transcendency of guilt, and your immortal minds be torn by the distraction of endless despair.

Remember then, in the scenes of sickness you behold, that you too are frail, and carry in your very natures, the elements of disease and death. You are fearfully and wonderfully made. And,

> "Strange, that a harp of a thousand strings,
> Should keep in tune so long."

II. *By the scene of a death-bed we are forcibly warned of our own dissolution.*

All nature teaches us the lesson of man's mortality, and God himself declares, dust thou art and unto dust shalt thou return. Fully persuaded as you may be, that it is appointed unto *man once to die*, the deep impression is seldom ever made upon your minds, that *you* must die.

" All men think all men mortal but themselves."—Painful in itself, the thought of death is banished from our minds. As it is blasting to the pleasures of youth, and a check to the ardor of human and worldly engagements, there is a continued effort to put off the consideration of dying, so that the man of seventy years seldom feels as near his grave as when he first stepped from his cradle and beheld the corpse of an infant. From a long nurtured unwillingness, to reflect on our own dissolution, the shroud, the repeated knell, and the grave only remind us. that another and another has gone to eternity.

But when we are called to stand at the bed of the dying; to see the lips of a friend quivering with a death-like effort to leave us one more warning, then turning livid and lifeless—when the last convulsive struggle closes the scene of mortality—the cold corpse is stretched before us, with its shroud and its coffin—death is brought home *to us ;*—it is now, if ever, we *feel* that *we* must *die*. Now too, if ever, the thought rushes on the soul, *am I ready !* Where, where shall I go ! !—*It is better to go to*

the house of mourning, than to go to the house of feasting, for the living will lay it to heart.

III. *Sickness and death show the vanity of all things on this side the grave.*

The great reason, why we are so unprepared to die, arises from the false estimate we form of the realities of this world. We clothe them with so much interest and value, that we regard it wise to place our affections upon them. We often, so firmly set our affections on things below, that we have no affections for things above ; serve the world so fully, that God is not in all our thoughts ; forfeit heaven by our attachments to earth. But in view of death, we are all compelled to regard this world as viewed by the wisdom of inspiration, "*vanity of vanities.*"

No one, in this hour of agony and dissolution, gathers any present consolation or hope for the future, from the pleasures that may have crowned his life, the honors he may have acquired, or the wealth he may have gained. And surely nothing is valuable in this world, but what prepares for a peaceful death and a glorious immortality. And what youth beneath the pressure of disease and the prospect of death, occupies his mind with plans of future pleasure, or draws enjoyment from all the splendours and luxuries of a world ? The remembrance of past pleasures affords no consolation ; the present has nothing but pain and derangement ; and the future presents only the alarming realities of eternity.

Lay all the honors of the world at the feet of a dying man, and he will struggle for their possession no more. He now discovers their true nature ; that they cannot ease a burdened mind or appease a guilty conscience. They give no relief to despair—no security of heaven. Bring exhaustless treasures, though they can purchase all this world can create, for him they purchase only a shroud, a coffin and a grave. The mind now loses all the supports of earth ; is fast sinking away ; and the soul is passionate, as the cries of importunity in its demands, for that support eternity only can afford. Even the man of age, who has completed all his plans of worldly happiness and honor, will bear the same full testimony in death to the vanity of all that this world calls great and good. In the conviction of his age and the honesty of that hour, he declares this world ever changing—delusive in her prospects—fickle in her friendships—in her widest and purest possessions, "*vanity of vanities.*" Combine the whole of this world, call it happy and great and good, it ends in tears and groans and death.

IV. *From the sick and the dying, we may learn the feelings suggested by the near approach of death.*

Death, as it is an event which must happen to all, and happen but once, bringing in that sad hour consequences momentous as the solemnities of the judgment with its unalterable issues, urges to every possible preparation for that last great change which awaits us all. Every source

of intelligence should be met with the deepest interest. We should listen in breathless silence to every whisper of the dying breath : it may tell us something before unknown. The most we can learn of this eventful hour is trifling compared to what experience teaches. While in life, we make few inquiries respecting the great necessities of death; living ignorant and regardless of these necessities, we make few preparations for its solemn issues; and it comes upon us suddenly, unexpectedly, and we are wholly unprepared to bear its burden or to meet its disclosures. It is then a salutary lesson to learn what we shall then want, and how we shall then feel; that we may prepare for our wants and be fortified for the conflict. If it come unexpectedly, it will find us unprepared : if we anticipate it, yet are ignorant of its necessities, it will be impossible to meet them. Listen then to what the dying shall say, and learn what they feel in death. Prepare for the conflict in which they now are struggling.

The peculiarities of death at a distance we seldom examine; and we love to keep it far from us. But when witnessing death, it becomes a reality; we begin to feel it : it is not now viewed in the anticipations of a dream. The case becomes almost our own. It is now we know, in some measure, what we shall feel, when *we* come to *die*. An expiring saint once said to her friend, "O, sir, it is a serious thing to die. No words can express what is needful to support the soul in the solemnities of a dying hour. The approach of death presents a prospect, which till now was hidden from me, and which *cannot be described*."

V. By scenes of sickness and of death we are reminded of the power of sin.

Could we be thrown for the first time, amid the thousand subjects of disease and death; behold unnumbered multitudes living in misery or dying in despair; what ideas should we form of this world? Should we regard it as the residence of innocence? Should we not at once conclude, that it was ruled by one who delighted in misery, or that mankind were suffering under the penal statutes of justice? Knowing, as we do, the goodness, the mercy, and justice of God, we cannot hesitate as to the cause of human misery and dissolution. The slightest sorrow is evidence of guilt: the agonies of death prove it consummate. *By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned. The wages of sin is death.* The first penalty of sin was recorded; "in the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." When that tremendous penalty was incurred, by eating the forbidden fruit, again the sentence came, still more specific, "dust thou art and unto dust shalt thou return." Sickness and death lead us back where one sin, in a moment blasted the hopes of a world, and placed the whole human family beneath divine displeasure. The ravages of sin have reached the present hour, and sin will extend its ravages onward to the judgment. It is impossible to look on the writhings of disease, the agonies of death, and the loathsomeness of corruption, and not be firmly persuaded of man's entire apostacy and

desperate wickedness. That God would ever permit such sufferings and disgrace to fall on innocence, is impossible.

Not only does the dying man, by the sorrows of his dissolution, assure us of the existence of sin pervading his whole nature; but it is now, that he makes known the deep convictions of his own heart. He makes no mention of his own virtue: he has no piety of his own to plead. Guilty, guilty, is the language of his heart—God be merciful to me a sinner. The pride of human morals is abased at death, and infidelity trembles at the grave. Multitudes, that have been too virtuous, to be reproved in life, find deep conviction of sin in death, and begin the despair of eternity ere time closes upon them.

VI. *At death we learn the value of probation, and the value of the means of grace.*

Is it the death of a saint that you witness? He ascribes all the happiness that religious hope can give, to that Saviour whom the gospel reveals. Those means of grace, which God has been using with him through the period granted in mercy as his probation, have been the power of God, and the wisdom of God unto salvation. Is it the death of a sinner that you witness? How does he plead for one day more of grace—he would exchange the universe for one hour, to make his peace with God. And if his probation lingers, and God spares his life, how poorly prepared is a sick and dying sinner, to dwell upon the great doctrines and duties of religion? Can he, amid all

the agitations of a soul just entering eternity, go over the wide field of redemption and salvation through Jesus Christ; clearly discover and approve the method of deliverance through the merits of his blood? Disordered by pain and distracted by the fearful apprehensions of a coming judgment—is it now his time to make his peace with God? Can he now wisely improve those means which God has given for our pardon and sanctification here; our justification and glory hereafter? Amid dissolving relations—last adieus—weeping relatives—new and opening scenes, with all the agitations of death, you may fully learn, the value of probation and the means of grace improved in days of health and of reason; when the mind can act with freedom and composure; intelligently apprehend the danger of depravity, and fully estimate the evidence of divine acceptance.

Those hopes, which the last hours of probation give, are too dangerous to trust. Reluctant necessity urges to lay hold on some relief; and the ardor, with which the soul then clings to hope, may be but the faith of mere presumption. The strugglings of a death-bed repentance, are, often, no more than the first enkindlings of that fire which shall never be quenched; and Satan, as an angel of light, may impart all the joy that appears to brighten and bless the dying sinner. Jesus Christ has taken away almost every hope of acceptance at the close of life, and left but one solitary record of so late forgiveness.

VII. *From the scene of death we may discover the value of Christ's atonement.*

There are a thousand false refuges to which we may flee in the course of life; and false as they are, we may rest satisfied with their delusion—but they all fail when God takes away the soul. And death is the hour, in which, man seeks that consolation which can never fail. Whence is this consolation to be derived? Does the dying man rest his hopes of salvation on the virtues of his life, on the purity and extent of his benevolence? No man who is rational, dies without the consciousness of sin; without the full persuasion that much of his life has been marked with impiety. And not all the virtue of an angel, not all the benevolence of heaven, can render that virtuous which has been stamped with vice. The pollution that immorality has left upon the soul, not years of virtue or of love can wash away. Present and permanent religion itself cannot change the character of previous, irreligious life. A heart, not perfectly pure in its nature, can draw no abiding consolation, in view of that eternity which shall reveal the secrets of the soul, from all the benevolence it may cherish. A life, not perfectly unbroken and unspotted in righteousness, can expect no acceptance from a holy God; "*for nothing that defileth can enter heaven.*" The soul just entering eternity may receive peace and consolation; but peace and consolation can never arise from human virtue or benevolence. Though they may have been constantly exercised, they are imperfect

still, and leave an impression of guilt upon the soul: for the command is, be ye holy, as God is holy. And where is the dying man who can present such unspotted holiness? You may say, he flees to the mercy and the grace of God, and in consolation expires. But the commingling attributes of wisdom, holiness and justice, are met as early and as clearly as mercy and grace. Wisdom searches out his secret sins; holiness frowns upon him, and justice demands the full execution of the violated law; and omnipotence stands pledged to vindicate the honor of Jehovah, though it result in the endless misery of the sinner.

In the agitation and distress of this trying uncertainty, multitudes expire without one ray of rational and christian hope. They would give the world for one rational assurance, that their peace was made with God: but there is not one for them, even in death.

Contemplate now, the last hours of a dying saint. Here you find consolation and perfect composure even in the agonies of death. And there is rational and religious ground for this composure and consolation. He is able to give a reason for the hope that is in him. That reason arises not from his virtue, and benevolence. He talks not of deeds that he has done. He lays his hand upon his mouth, and his mouth in the dust. He is silent before the awful and unseen majesty of that God, on whom he expects soon to open his eyes in the light of eternity. The most he expresses is deep conviction of sin; sincere confession of unrighteousness, and an intelligent

and cordial confidence in the blood of mediation. His last prayer is, "unclean, unclean, God be merciful to me a sinner." And that mercy which he hopes to meet, is the purchase of a Saviour's love. His only hope of pardon rests on the mediation of Jesus Christ. "*It is Christ that died:*" and as he beholds with an eye of faith the blood of his cross, he cries, "Lord remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom;" and with divine assurance of heaven, he dies triumphing over death and the grave.

He, that is conversant with dying saints and dying sinners, can never doubt the power and glory of Christ's atonement. There is a peaceful and sublime influence rising from a Redeemer's blood; a rapture, that a seraph might adore, bursting from the lips of mortality, as the soul is springing from the corruptions of earth to the glories of God; and O! there is an agonizing sinking of the soul without the supports of Christ—the last moment of time is the very beginning of eternal despair.

Finally—*At the bed of death we may learn the nature and efficacy of Christian truth.*

The conflicting opinions of the christian world have been arrayed in opposition to the divine origin of our religion. That diversity of sentiment, which passion, prejudice and circumstances have created, to the obscurity and perversion of divine truth, has led many to skepticism and complete infidelity; and from it, license has been taken by others, to form religious systems agreeable

to the passions of depraved nature. But death usually detects the delusion of false religion and strengthens the believer in the faith of the gospel. Indeed the various peculiarities of the christian system, are strikingly exemplified at death: in that hour when the soul has lost all motives to deceive, and speaks its deep convictions with sincerity.

We believe it a part of this system, that man is a sinner, entirely destitute of personal holiness: and scarcely on all the records of death can you find the man, who in his dying moments, has not confessed the deep depravity of his heart, or by his dread of meeting God plainly declared it. That man whose tongue never faltered in blaspheming the Lord Jesus, in death will own the insult offered to his name, and supplicate his pardon. I never saw a dying man, that could say, that he merited salvation from God, or had any hope of forgiveness save from that mercy, the very offer of which is proof of his condemnation and desperate wickedness. That which once was arrayed in his own justification, now vanishes away, and all his righteousness, of which he boasted, is *filthy rags*.

We believe, that in the Christian system of truth is contained the doctrine of regeneration by the Holy Spirit, founded on the atonement which we have considered. And every death-bed exhibits the peace and the purity and the joy of this moral renovation, or the agonizing evidence of its want. We find the soul rising in the beauty and strength of its new creation, or sinking with that deep

pollution that remains unwashed away. There you hear no mention made of grace of native growth; no holiness cultured by human hands; no hopes founded on the efforts of the soul. The language of every dying believer is the same, *not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy, he saved us, by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost.* And the testimony wrung from the doubt and distress of every dying sinner, declares with solemn emphasis, *except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.*

We believe, gratuitous justification through faith in Jesus Christ to be an essential element in the system of Christian truth. That it is the sovereign grace of God alone, that saves the sinner from eternal death. With the dying we discover no solid support from any source, but God's sovereign grace; and surely nothing but this ever caused a *triumphant* death. In all, but those confiding in the sovereign power of God, and the pledge given to the Redeemer, that He should have a seed to serve him from apostate men, there is such vagueness of conceptions; so little intelligence as to the objects of faith; so little reason for what confidence and composure may exist; so little happy resignation to the will of God, that we are compelled to the belief that *their* system is false, and all hopes based upon it delusive as dreams. But that man, who has cast all his hopes on the sovereign power and pleasure of his God, has no other refuges to which to flee; no other objects of confidence, to draw away and distract his mind. Trusting in that declaration of Jesus Christ,

all whom my Father hath given me shall come unto me, and no one shall pluck them out of my hands; confiding in the divinity of that spirit, which through the love of Christ *constrains* him to yield his soul and body to the pleasure of his God; and knowing that if there is safety in the universe it must be here, and having a testimony within, that he loves this method of divine grace, he exclaims with unshaken trust, *I know in whom I have believed.*

A sinner may regard the gospel as the only guide to heaven; its author as divinely commissioned, and as clothed with divine perfections; he may regard his death as an affecting sanction to the truth of his religion, and his resurrection from the dead as the last testimony of his divine authority; he may even regard the shedding of his blood as a sacrifice for sin: but without reliance on that *sovereign grace and pleasure* of Almighty God, who applies the purchase of a Saviour's death to the depraved and revolting soul, there can be no true consolation. *By grace are ye saved:* and the only evidence of salvation *by grace*, springs from the cheerful giving up of all into the hands of God, *who has mercy on whom he will have mercy.* There is nothing but confidence in this *sovereign pleasure* and *power* of God, which can secure the soul from doubt and despair: for without God's pleasure, what support can be firm; what consolation can be abiding? With *that*, a soul immortal can demand no more.

If God be for us, who can be against us? Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Nothing shall separate the believer from the love

of God, which is in Christ Jesus the Lord. This is the consolation that blesses the believer in his death, and with this he triumphs over all the powers of the grave. But through all the wide range of error, more specially of that which denies the vicarious sufferings of Christ, and the application of sovereign grace to the soul, through the merits of his blood, there never has been, and there never can be found a triumphant death. Obliterated conscience may leave brutish stupidity—pride may restrain the strugglings that agonize the soul—philosophy, reluctantly submitting to necessity, may nerve with savage fortitude—human casuisty may create delusive calmness—but there is nothing here, to give even the false expectations of a hypocrite's hope, much less to create that rapture which springs from intelligent faith in Jesus Christ, and full submission to the will of God. Sovereign grace is the rock on which the Christian rests and triumphs in his death. Every other hope expires from the sinner when God takes away the soul. It is this that constitutes the gratitude of heaven and the glory of the redeemed. *Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.* "Then, blessed Jesus, our tongues shall never falter in ascribing to Thee the honors of thy divinity;" and God forbid that we should ever rest one hope of heaven save on the grace of his Almighty Sovereignty.

Called, as I recently have been, to an intimate acquaintance with the sickness and death of an eminent saint, I

cannot but feel deeply the truths which we have now considered. There I found a practical illustration.

The lamented individual, whose death has occasioned the reflections of this morning, was well known to you all. Long had she taken a deep interest in your spiritual prosperity: and that prosperity, which recently you so eminently enjoyed, stands connected with the many prayers which she made for your salvation. In most of your dwellings had her pious father commended your families to God. With you, some of the dearest objects of her earthly affections have been cast: and holding that sacred and responsible relation which they do to you, your interests, as connected with them, have long formed a vast portion of her pious solicitude. Many of the kindest promises of Christ to his desponding ministers, your minister has realized at her hands. The last time she worshipped God in his sanctuary, she worshipped with you in this house. Here is left the affecting remembrance of her piety and her prayers.

She was a descendant of those who were distinguished for their piety, and early was her own heart imbued with the spirit of true religion. So affectionately did she yield to the sanctifying influence of divine grace, that the elements of her native character were soon changed, and she bore pre-eminently the image of her divine Saviour. In that image the rough features of fallen nature were all lost, and her soul seemed always tranquil and happy in uncommon nearness to God.

Having passed through a period of protracted, and almost unparalleled suffering, she every day grew in resigna-

tion to the will of God, and with an indescribable calmness ascribed all to the desert of sin: with filial fear and love, she yielded herself with holy cheerfulness, to the just and merciful chastenings of a parental hand. When the pressure and the pains of disease seemed too severe for nature, even in its strength to endure, she most affectionately gave up her broken and suffering frame to the pleasure of God; saying, in language beyond description submissive and tender, "though He slay me yet will I trust in Him." In her view, pains severe as nature could endure, were nothing compared to the desert of sinfulness. Though for years, the most observing could mark scarce one failure in Christian duty, or defect in Christian feeling; and though reminded, as a source of consolation in her last hours, of her Christian fidelity in life, she poured forth the most melting confessions of her unfaithfulness to her friends and her family—the church and the world. All then was confession of neglected duty. Here was no ground of consolation. She was too near heaven to value her own righteousness as the pledge of divine favour. Her hope was on a firmer rock. In that hope she was happy, and rose superior to the infirmities of our degenerate nature. Grace abounding over sin, to the glory of God was her exalted happiness. Jesus, O how precious! was her constant declaration. Turning from every earthly consolation, her last words are a living testimony to the grace of God. *I know in whom I have believed. I know that my Redeemer liveth.* Thus calm and happy, in the hopes of the believer, she fell asleep in Jesus the resurrection.

Though dead she yet speaketh. Her life was an example of piety too bright ever to be forgotten. She showed the result of Christian independence in leaving relations and friends, and taking a decided stand in religious separation from the world. Hers was a separation from the world, made decided and firm by pious principle; consistent and happy, by the warm attachment of her soul to Christ and his cause. Her object in this separation was to bring her friends to God; as she gave herself to Christ she left *them*, tenderly entreating them to go with her; giving the positive assurance that to go with them she never could. And as God always blesses the *consistent Christian*, she had the happiness to find her nearest earthly friend in the joys of Christian hope, with gratitude for her decided stand on the side of Christ separate from the world. She knew, that conformity to the world and the wishes of impenitent relatives was the surest way to fix them in spiritual death; a holy walk with God the loudest call to penitence and piety.

In her life and at her death, she testified to the value of the everlasting covenant. She felt its obligations; confided and rejoiced in the promises of God to believers and their offspring. Knowing that the promised blessings of the covenant could be received only through faith and prayer, together with the moral and religious care of those entrusted to her guidance, she found no difficulty in determining the path of her duty and of their safety. She often reminded them of her solemn vows and promises to God and his church; and affectingly held before them the blessings to which they were invited, and the obliga-

tions which arose from their dedication to God. She carried them to *her* Father and to *their* Father, with confidence in the truth of his gracious promises, and through the blessing of the God of grace she was permitted to see them kneeling around her dying bed, prayerfully giving up their hearts to God, pledging themselves to her and to the Lord Jesus, to devote their lives to the service of God. Time must determine the sincerity and value of these solemn vows. But they cannot be forgotten except with guilt that merits absolute reprobation.

Knowing and loving those who have departed in the peace and joy of religion, and shuddering at the despair of the dying reprobate, we are called upon, by all that is tender and impressive in piety, by all that is affecting in the consolations of the dying, and by all that is frightful in the agonies of impenitence, to turn to God, to live more to his glory, soberly, righteously and godly in this present evil world, that we may die the death of the righteous, free from the remembrance of neglected duty, violated vows, and a dishonored Saviour. O, may you so live to God that you may be freed from reproaches in the hour of death, when it is too late to remedy the evil you have done.

With this solemn subject before you, and with that affecting providence of God which can but enforce his truth, in the name of the Lord Jesus, I entreat you to live for Christ and the eternal interests of man. The judgment day will soon try your lives, and try your souls. *Prepare to die!* Death will be dreadful to those who

have no God. It may be so to many of you. Forget not I pray you, that you are nigh the grave. There is but a step between you and death. Bear about with you the dying of the Lord Jesus—a lively and practical remembrance of the dead. Let not your fallen and forgetful natures turn away from the warnings of the dying. You have resolved and solemnly vowed, as you have wept over the remains of the dead, that you would live for God and prepare for heaven. Friends are dead; and now will you profane their memory and violate your vows by engaging in scenes and services, which were worse than savage at the time of their departure? O, how often are the dead forgotten in a moment, and those who followed them, in tears to the grave, are sporting in the gaieties and vices of life?—The dead are almost heard to exclaim, *is this the remembrance you have of us? is this your preparation to meet us at the judgment day?* O, be not ungrateful for the piety of the departed—forget not the kind warnings of the dying—dishonor not the memory of the dead. Bear about the dying of the Lord Jesus, and may every friend that has gone home to heaven be a treasure there, to lead your heart to God.—At last and forever may you have fellowship with the saints you loved on earth, and with Christ in heaven—where sin no more deranges and where death no more destroys.

Mrs. Clarke, while on a visit to Canandaigua in June, 1826, was taken severely ill at the house of the author of the foregoing discourse. Here she was confined by a painful disease for eight weeks. Having partially reco-

vered she was removed to her family at Utica, where after a painful and protracted sickness she died, 10th of February, 1827. The following is from the Sermon of the Rev. Mr. Aikin, preached at her funeral :

Mrs. Clarke was a child of faith and prayer. She was early dedicated to God by pious parents, and brought up in his nurture and fear. The particular history of her conversion is unknown to the writer. In 1800, however, and in the 21st year of her age, she united with the church in Northampton. From that time to the day of her death, religion has been her comfort and support. Mrs. Clarke was one of those rare Christians, who seldom had to undo what she had done. Grace, connected with a disposition naturally even and amiable, gave to her great uniformity of character. As to religious feeling, she was always the same, both in adversity and prosperity, and her walk and conversation were equally uniform and circumspect. She loved religion ; and her piety was so unaffected and sincere, so much did it partake of the simplicity of the gospel, that it could not fail to commend itself to every man's conscience. Owing to such qualities, her example was of the most persuasive kind. It was a light in the world—a light, too, which death cannot extinguish. She has left an influence that will exert itself upon human character, so long as the sun endures. In her devotional and exemplary life, Mrs. C. exhibited evidence that she knew from her own experience, the blessedness of those who are chosen of God, and whom he causeth to approach him. Like her eminently pious father, the Rev. Solomon Allen, whose praise is in the church, she was much in the

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habit of secret prayer. But her religion was not confined to the closet. Her kindness and liberality to the poor, her activity in the general cause of benevolence, so far as a feeble constitution would permit, evinced her belief that "faith, without works, is dead." She appeared "an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no guile." Her friendships were sincere and lasting. Her kind and peaceable disposition was acknowledged by all with whom she was connected. She evidently possessed that "meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price." Her apparel and deportment were in unison with the humility of her heart. As a wife, she was kind and condescending; as a mother, tender beyond description. As a neighbor and friend, she was greatly beloved.

It might be expected, that a Christian like Mrs. Clarke would die as she had lived. During a long and painful sickness, she was calm, patient, submissive, and even cheerful. She longed after entire conformity to the divine character. Often did she exclaim—"O, I wish for nothing so much, as that my will may be entirely lost in the will of God." For a few days before her death, her faith was very lively and unwavering; her hope raised even to assurance; her comforts were strong and heavenly; and when the last moment arrived, she yielded her soul to the Saviour, and fell asleep in his arms. In her life, her sufferings and death, were exhibited the precious fruits of divine grace. In reference to her it may truly be said—"Blessed are the dead, who die in the Lord, that they may rest from their labors, and their works do follow them."